

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Claims 1-10, 12, 14-38 are currently pending in the instant application. Claims 1, 14 and 30 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, 16, 17 and 19-22 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Claims 1 and 30 are independent. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Reasons for Entry of Amendment

As discussed in greater detail hereinafter, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) are improper and should be withdrawn. Accordingly, the finality of the Final Office Action mailed on May 19, 2004 should be withdrawn.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies of the interview conducted on June 17, 2004 with Applicants' representative. During the interview, the Examiner clarified the rejections based on the Vockenhuber '072 reference. On page 17 of the Office Action mailed on May 19, 2004, the Vockenhuber reference should refer to U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072. However, no further issues were discussed during this interview.

If the Examiner persists in maintaining his rejections, Applicants submit that this Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that Applicants are responding to new grounds of rejection. In addition, Applicants submit that the

inconsistencies in the rejection(s) concerning the Vockenhuber (U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072) resulted in a reduction of the time available to Applicants to consider and properly respond to the apparent grounds of rejection. Accordingly, Applicants request that the finality of the Office Action mailed on May 19, 2004 be withdrawn if maintained responsive to this Amendment.

In accordance with the requirements of 37 CFR 1.116, Applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of the foregoing amendments as they remove issues for appeal and place the current application in a condition for allowance.

Interview

Applicants appreciate the courtesies of the interview conducted on June 17, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner clarified the rejections based on the Vockenhuber '072 reference. On page 17 of the Office Action mailed on May 19, 2004, the Vockenhuber reference should refer to U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072. No further issues were discussed during this interview.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of acceptance of the certified copy of the corresponding priority document for the present application.

Drawings

Applicants would appreciate the Examiner's indication of acceptance of the formal drawings filed on June 4, 1999. In addition, Applicants have not received a Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) indicating that there are any informalities with the drawings. Since the Examiner has not cited any informalities or objections to the drawings, Applicants submit that the formal drawings appear to be approved by the USPTO. Accordingly, no further action with respect to the drawings is required by Applicants.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 14 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the claimed invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing amendments have been made to merely clarify the claimed invention as these alleged informalities should have been merely objected to by the Examiner.

Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the application, Applicants have incorporated the changes recommended by the Examiner. Applicants submit that the requested changes do not

appear to either raise a substantial question of the patentability of the claimed invention nor do they narrow the scope of the claimed invention.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 30 and 31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Vockenhuber (U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072).

If the Examiner is relying on any portions of Vockenhuber (U.S. Patent No. 5,329,325) in any manner with respect to this rejection, Applicants submit that this rejection must be clarified by the Examiner and the finality of the Office Action mailed on May 19, 2004 must be withdrawn. Therefore, Applicants comments are only directed to the Vockenhuber ('072) reference.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have amended claim 30 to clarify the invention for the benefit of the Examiner. Specifically, Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 30, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the feature(s) of: "wherein the first image-capturing unit comprises *a first connecting part that mechanically and directly*

connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit." (Emphasis Added) Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has relied upon the cameras 1 and 4 of Vockenhuber to allegedly show first and second image-capturing units that are allegedly detachably connected to one another. Applicants submit that FIG. 1 merely shows a single electrical connection between the first and second cameras (elements 1 and 4 in Vockenhuber). However, even if the Vockenhuber cameras were detachably connected to one another, Applicants submit that Vockenhuber fails to teach or suggest an image-capturing apparatus wherein the first image-capturing unit comprises a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 5-6, 7, 9-10, 12, 14-15, 18 and 30-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto et al. (U.S. 6,151,067) in view of Vockenhuber (U.S. 4,148,072). Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Vockenhuber '072 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Kaneko (U.S. 4,920,371). Claims 23 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Vockenhuber '072 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Ishikawa et al. (U.S. 6,549,650).

Claims 24-26, and 33-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Vockenhuber '072 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Ishikawa et al. Claims 27-29, and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Vockenhuber '072 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Fellegara et al. (U.S. 6,441,854). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants submit that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the feature(s) of: "joint holes for connecting with joints of the second image-capturing unit." Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 30, as discussed in greater detail hereinabove with respect to the Vockenhuber reference, Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the feature(s) of: "wherein the first image-capturing unit comprises *a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit.*" (Emphasis Added) Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

With respect to claims 1 and 30, the Examiner has acknowledged that Suemoto et al. fail to teach or suggest a lens controller driving the zoom lens of the first and second image-capturing optical systems to equalize magnifications of the first and second-image capturing optical systems. In addition, the alleged first and second image capturing units (elements 10 and 90 in Suemoto et al.) are detachably connected via elements 11 and 91 (multi-connector 11 and multi-connector 91 of the AV connector or crystal monitor). However, Applicants submit that the multi-connectors 11 and 91 of Suemoto et al. are not joint holes for connecting with joints of the second image-capturing unit. Since the Vockenhuber reference fails to teach or suggest this deficiency, Applicants submit that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn and the present application should be allowed.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.


In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for

any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly,
extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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